LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1-18. (Canceled).

19. (Previously Presented) A gaming machine comprising:

a bill acceptor configured to receive bills tendered, the bill acceptor comprising a sensor configured to evaluate each received bill and to output a signal indicative of one of an acceptance and a rejection of the received bill;

an annunciator having an array of illuminating elements configured to be illuminated in first, second, and third illuminating patterns, the first illuminating pattern being different from the second illuminating pattern, the second illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern, and the first illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern; and

a controller having a first counter and a second counter, the controller configured to

increment the first counter on each occurrence of an acceptance signal,

increment the second counter on each occurrence of a rejection signal,

determine a bill acceptance rate based upon a ratio of a count of the first counter to a sum comprising respective counts of the first and second counters,

detect a malfunction of the bill acceptor based upon the bill acceptance rate,

sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, and third patterns repetitively to indicate that a malfunction of the bill acceptor has not been detected, and

sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, third, and second patterns repetitively to indicate a malfunction of the bill acceptor has been detected.

20. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine of claim 19, wherein the annunciator is arranged in an area of the bill acceptor that receives bills and is visible external of the gaming machine.

21. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine of claim 19, wherein

the controller is configured to detect a malfunction of the bill acceptor in response to the bill acceptance rate falling below a value, and

the value is at most about 90 percent.

22. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine of claim 19, wherein

the controller is configured to detect a malfunction of the bill acceptor in response to the bill acceptance rating falling below a value, and

the value is at most about 80 percent.

23. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine of claim 19, wherein

the controller is configured to detect a malfunction of the bill acceptor in response

to the bill acceptance rating falling below a value, and

the value is at most about 70 percent.

24. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine of claim 19, wherein the

controller is further configured to determine an updated bill acceptance rate following

each insertion of a bill into the bill acceptor.

25. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine of claim 24, wherein the

gaming machine further comprises a network interface and wherein the controller is in

communication with the network interface and communicates signals relating to the bill

acceptance rate to the network interface for communication onto a network.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a bill acceptor of a gaming machine, the gaming machine including an annunciator represented by an array of illuminating elements, the method comprising:

receiving a bill at the bill acceptor;

sensing at least one characteristic of the received bill;

generating one of an acceptance signal and a rejection signal using the at least one sensed characteristic;

incrementing a respective one of an acceptance counter and a rejection counter based on the respective acceptance and rejection signals;

determining a bill acceptance rate of the bill acceptor based on dividing a cumulated value of the acceptance counter by a sum comprising respective cumulated values of the acceptance and rejection counters;

detecting a malfunction of the bill acceptor in response to the bill acceptance rate falling below a value

automatically, repetitively, and sequentially activating a plurality of illuminating elements in first, second, and third patterns, the first illuminating pattern being different from the second illuminating pattern, the second illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern, and the first illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern in response to not detecting a malfunction of the bill acceptor; and

automatically, repetitively, and sequentially activating the plurality of illuminating elements in first, second, third, and second patterns in response to detecting a malfunction of the bill acceptor.

28-29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine of claim 19, wherein the first, second, and third illuminating patterns are configured to create an impression feeding towards the bill acceptor.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27, wherein the first, second, and third illuminating patterns are configured to create an impression feeding towards the bill acceptor.